

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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CONFIDENTIAL USNATO 1480

FOR EUR/RPM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XF, XI
SUBJECT: NATO EXPERTS REPORT ON THE MIDDLE
EAST AND THE MAGHREB

REF: (A) USNATO A-117, MARCH 10, 1977; (B) USNATO 1406

1. WE HAVE TRANSMITTED BY REFAIR THE TEXT OF THE NATO EXPERT'S REPORT ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE HAGHREB (CM(77)14). THIS CABLE FORWARDS PROPOSED TALKING POINTS FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S USE WHEN THE REPORT IS REVIEWED BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL (NAC). THE REPORT HAS NOT YET BEEN PLACED ON THE NAC AGENDA BUT WE EXPECT IT TO BE CONSIDERED WITHIN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS. AT THE NOVEMBER 11 NAC, A S/SYG PANSA INDICATED THAT THE REPORTS ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON THE SITUATION IN AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA (USNATO 1330) PROBABLY WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE SAME MEETING OF THE COUNCIL. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS AND THE EXPERTS' REPORT.

2. BEGIN TEXT DRAFT TALKING POINTS:
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--THIS REPORT REFLECTS THE GREAT DIVERSITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB AS WELL AS THE WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE HAVE IN THOSE IMPORTANT REGIONS. IT RIGHTLY EMPHASIZES THE PROBLEM AREAS WHERE WE ALL, TO ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER, HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT AT STAKE.

-- A MEETING OF OUR EXPERTS WAS A PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE PRELUDE TO OUR MARCH 11

COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST. WE WELCOMED THE FACT THAT THE EXPERTS' REPORT COULD BE CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THAT MEETING: AND I KNOW THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON, FOR ONE, READ IT WITH INTEREST AND APPRECIATION.

--WE ARE ALL WELL AWARE THAT WE CONCE AGAIN FACE A CRITICAL PERIOD IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS WE ATTEMPT TO REVIVE THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS.

--AS MR. ATHERTON STATED ON MARCH 11, MY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A STRONG AND CLEAR COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH ALL THE PARTIES TO MAKE PROGRESS THIS YEAR TOWARDS PEACE IN THE AREA.

--WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE REPORT'S CONCLUSION THAT THE CURRENT EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST CAN BEST BE VIEWED WITH "CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM", BUT WE WILL REMAIN MINDFUL OF THE SERIOUS RISKS POSED BY A FAILURE TO ACHIEVE SOME FORWARD MOVE- MENT THIS YEAR.

--WE ARE ENCOURAGED THAT OUR EXPERTS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT "THE PROPOSECTS OF RESTORING MO- MENTUM TO THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS APPEAR FAVORABLE".
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WE ARE REALISTIC, HOWEVER. THE REPORT IDENTI- FIES MANY OF THE SERIOUS OBSTACLES WHICH STAND IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS, AS MR. ATHERTON MADE CLEAR, WE WILL BE WORKING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP DEAL WITH THESE OBSTACLES.

--AS WE PROCEED WITH THIS ENDEAVOR, WE HOPE TO HAVE THE CONTINUED BENEFIT OF EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AMONG OUR GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS. THE WORK OF THE EXPERTS HERE AT NATO PLAYS A USEFUL ROLE IN THAT PROCESS. END TEXT. STRAUSZ-HUPE

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